

\$10 Million Spent to Study Oil-Shale Impact

By Jim Woolsey

Tribune Environmental Correspondent

More is known about the environment of a 10,240-acre tract in southern Uintah County than any similar-sized parcel in the state, maybe the country, claims the director of environmental affairs for the White River Shale Oil Company.

Jim Godlove said in an interview his company has spent eight years and \$10 million studying the air, water, plants and animals on the land.

The land it has leased from the federal government. The parcel is near the Utah-Colorado border in a desolate area 10 miles south of Vernal.

"We don't know what the environment there will be and what the impact of our project might be on the environment," he said. "We don't think any of

the impacts will be adverse," said Mr. Godlove, who is president of the White River Shale Oil Company.

Oil-Rich Environment

Oil Company Studies Utah Tract

Continued From Page B-1 The White River recently completed its third step area. Since no large-scale oil shale plants in the environmental scale oil shale plants in the environmental have ever been built, Mr. Godlove said, these preoperational documents of impacts are the "best guess." They are just educated guesses.

"We've tried to identify whether the company can identify the extent of the impacts, and we don't feel any of them will be very severe. However, we definitely will cause some changes in the environment," he predicted.

One of those changes will result from dumping oil shale environmental processed shale over as much as 2,300 acres of White River's monitoring land by the time the reclamation project is complete.

"Obviously 2,300 acres will be a major change, but we don't think it will be adverse. We've already spent \$1 million to develop a reclamation plan and we believe we can return that land to its current level of production," said Mr. Godlove.

Initially designed to look at certain aspects of the environment that indicate the condition of larger plant and animal communities.

For example, trapping will be conducted annually in eight areas of the tract. At each location 144 traps will be set and checked daily for five days in a row. The mice which are caught will be measured, sexed, tagged and released.

The importance of this test, said Mr. Godlove, is that the abundance of mice reflects the relative health of many of the other plants and animals in the area. If monitoring reveals that the mouse population is dropping, company scientists will

have to determine whether it's due to natural

processes or man-made factors. The company plans to spend another \$10 million to build a plant and to move the oil shale from the site.

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File
White River
Shale